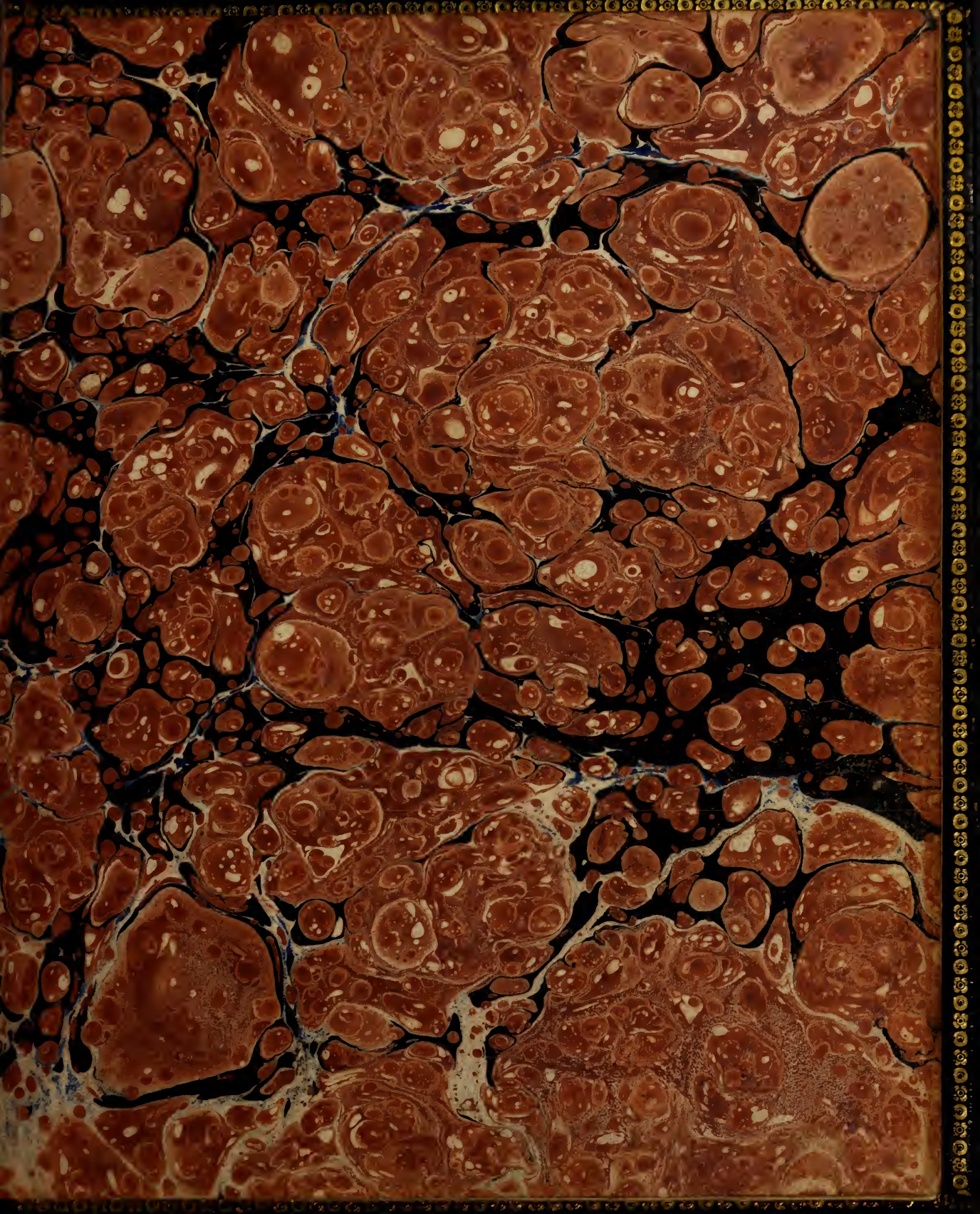


2.—3.—D. 232 Collection (A) of the Papers put forth as Shakespeare's, ORIGINAL
 FORGERIES, executed by W. H. Ireland, in 1796, mounted, *Sottie by*
 each leaf signed by the maker *since 174.*
the letters of the blue morocco, gilt edges; from Astle's Collection, with his *1858.*
Since added. book plate *4to.*



Edward Astle Esq^r



Lib. n. 4

Sp. 1.

10p
Friday Morning
D H (ack)

My dear Sir
I shall not get the rest printed of the Triphookas
Catalogue till about 3 o'clock this day when
I shall call or send some to you as at that
hour my appointment is to see him. Will
you have the goodness per bearer to remit the
several Prints Drawings and Vols I left with you
as I may try to do something with them as
well as the Shakespeare Autographs - My father's
Portrait keep back as I shall get it cleaned
prior to going into the country & it may as
well remain with you as come here. What
you have to send me I believe Twelve Prints
& the Vols. accompanying - the Prints of Lancelot
French Quarto Vol. with three engravings and
autographs the Drawing of Beauharnois with
other Prints and the Shakespearean forgeries -
pray excuse that scrawl but I have had another
night without a moments sleep and am
more like a Man than I am in his service.

Yours ever obliged

W Ireland

*Ireland's
Shaksperiana.*

A.D.

1796.

W^m H^y Ireland.

153.644

May, 1873.

Signatures

To Mortgage Deed of

Shakspear & Fraser.



William Shakespeare

Rich. Jackson

W.C.I.



*Signature
of
Elizabeth.*

The purport of the Letter written by me
as from Elizabeth to Shakspear ran as
follows.

The Commentators on Shakspear have
alleged that King James the first
promised an Epistle to Shakspear, which
prompted me to write the above Epistle
as from Queen Elizabeth. This was also
done that our Bard might be thought
worthy the notice of the greatest personage
of his time.

Elizabeth

M.S.



*Signature
of
Lord Southampton.*



Forbampton.

1785.



Memorandum
of Fifty pounds received
from
Lord Leicester.



*Memorandum
of the playing
before
Lord Leicester.*



*Signatures
to the Agreement
between
Shakspear & Lovin.*

William Shakespeare

Jn. Lowrie

WMS



Signatures
to the Agreement
between
Shakspear & Condell.



William Shakespeare

L^d & Caravelle

MS.



Signature
to the
Deed of Trust.

Dy mo Wm Shakspere



Signature
to the Seed of Gift
to.
Ireland.

William Shakespeare

1771



Promissory Note
to
John Hemminges.

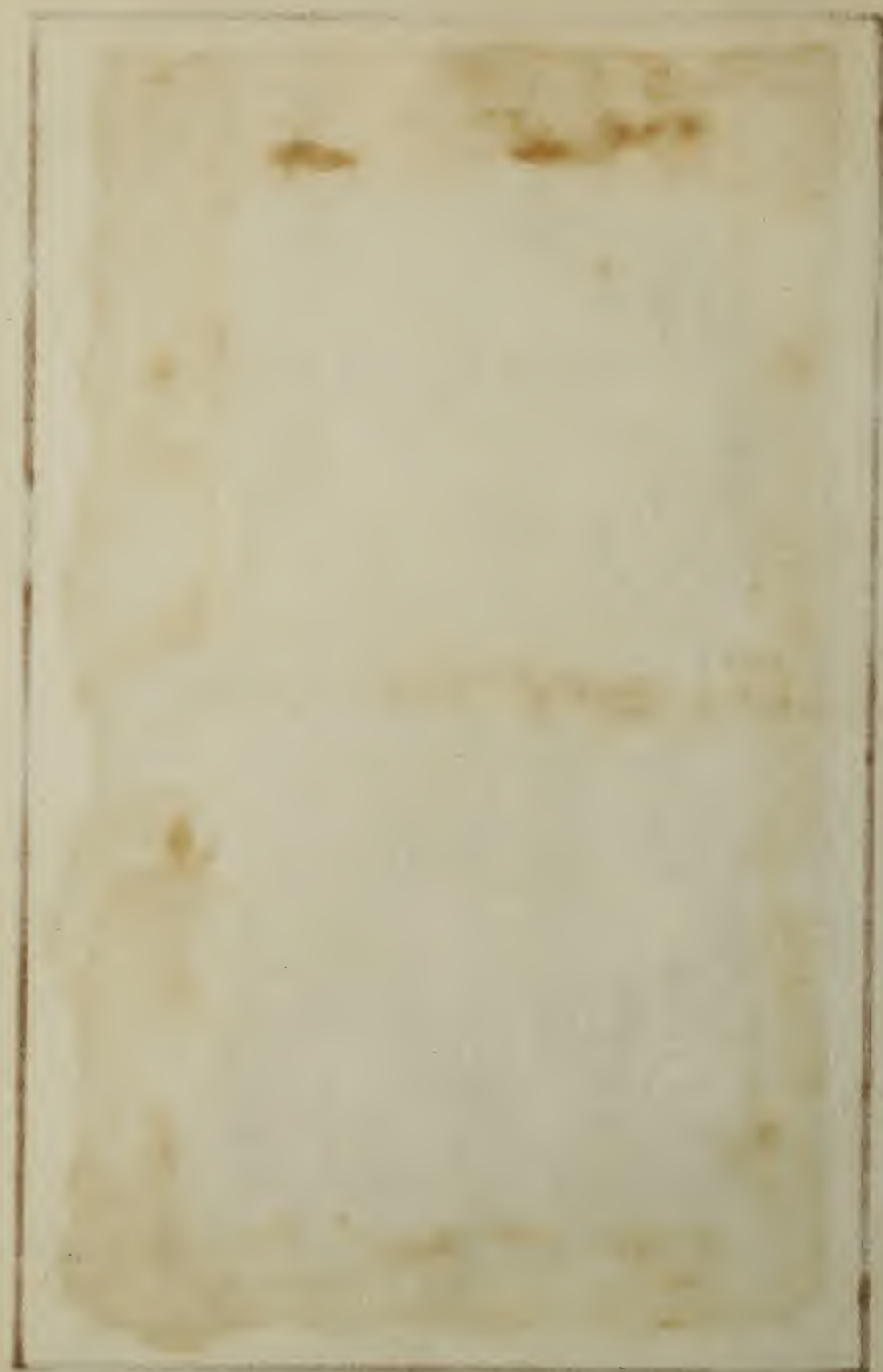
One Month from the date hereof I do promise to pay to
my good and lawfull friend William Henry the sum of five
pounds and six pence but say Money as a compensation for
the same he shall be in possession and have much for most
of the same as also for his expenses in going down for most
of the said witness my hand

Wm Hyattson

September

16th August 1589

1744



Receipt
of
John Hemmings

Received of Master Wm Bakspere
the Sum of Two Pounds and five
Shillings Good English Money by
Nynl Day of Octobr 1589
In Testimony
of

Wm



First Leaf
of
Vortigern.

Mye praye offe vnto ymo offe ffor myne
mye praye offe vnto ymo offe ffor myne
ffor myne offe vnto ymo offe ffor myne
ffor myne offe vnto ymo offe ffor myne
ffor myne offe vnto ymo offe ffor myne
ffor myne offe vnto ymo offe ffor myne
ffor myne offe vnto ymo offe ffor myne

William Shakespeare

Q

1111



BOSTON DAILY ADVERTISER.

MONDAY MORNING, SEPT. 24, 1877.

IRELAND'S FORGERIES.

A great library is like a shore upon which the restless tide casts all its burdens. There are the rare and beautiful shells, to use Sir Isaac Newton's figure, of the illimitable ocean of truth. There are also the waifs and strays of the world of literature. To its shelves come both books and the crude materials out of which books were to have been made,—these latter oftentimes the fragments of wrecks, as it were, with sad memories clinging to them of wasted lives and lost hopes. Among these fragments stranded in our public library is one of uncommon interest. It is but a scrap or two of paper, it is true, upon which are written a few almost illegible words. Yet these bits of paper, insignificant and uninteresting as they seem now, caused a sensation eighty years ago in England almost unexampled in its intensity. When they were shown to Boaden, a scholar of some note, they excited in him, to use his own words, "a tremor of the purest delight." Boswell, the son of Johnson's biographer, fell down on his knees before them, exclaiming: "Well, I 'shall now die contented, since I have lived 'to witness the present day. I now kiss the 'invaluable relics of our bard, and thanks to 'God that I have lived to see them."

Their story in brief is this: A young conveyancer's clerk named Ireland, a lad of seventeen, suddenly produced some old manuscripts which he said had been given him by a gentleman who wished to remain unknown. On examination they were pronounced to be genuine Shakespearian documents, and universal was the joy at the supposed discovery. A few only, chief among whom was Malone, the accomplished student of Shakespeare, denied their authenticity. At first only comparatively short manuscripts were produced, but at length it was announced that the manuscript of a play called "*Vortigern* and Rowena" had been discovered. This increased the excitement tenfold. Sheridan, then lessee of the Drury-lane theatre, bought the play for £300 and the half-profits for the first sixty nights. To Kemble was given the part of *Vortigern*. The failure of the play, brought about in great measure by Kemble's peculiar emphasis, amidst the wildest uproar of the audience, of the line,—

"And when this solemn mockery is o'er,"

was complete, and the play was withdrawn.

About the same time the elder Ireland published a description of the manuscripts with fac-similes. This publication, together with the failure of *Vortigern*, hastened the end. Malone now found it easy to show them to be forgeries, and soon after the "Confessions of "W. H. Ireland" was given to the world."

Great was the chagrin of all those who had maintained the authenticity of the manuscripts at having been so thoroughly duped by a boy, and it was not strange that some attempted to deny their championship. In a copy of the confessions in the Barton collection of the public library, which belonged to Caley the antiquary, to whom the papers were submitted, is a note signed by him declaring that Ireland in his work had entirely misrepresented his opinion. Yet the forgeries were by no means clumsily done, and considerable ingenuity was displayed in giving to them a semblance of genuineness. The paper on which they were written was taken from the blank leaves of books published in Shakespeare's day. The threads attaching the seals to the deeds were procured from a bit of old tapestry hanging in an ante-chamber to the house of lords.

The specimens in the library have a peculiar interest, as they were mounted by Ireland himself, and each leaf is signed with his initials. For a title there is written in a bold boyish hand, "Ireland's Shaksperiana. A:D: '1796. Wm H. Ireland." They consist of signatures of Shakespeare and others, promissory notes, bills for playing, together with a memorandum relating to *Vortigern*. Opposite the signature of Queen Elizabeth, Ireland has written his motive for the forgery of the letter, of which only this signature is given: "The commentators on Shakspear have 'alleged that King James the first penned 'an epistle to Shakspear which prompted me 'to write the above epistle as from Queen 'Elizabeth. This was also done that our 'bard might be thought worthy the notice of 'the greatest personage of his time."

Not the least interesting thing in this little volume is a letter of Ireland's without a date, but evidently after the confession of his forgeries. He closes with these words: "Pray excuse this scrawl, but I have had 'another night without a *moment's sleep*, 'and am more like a man drunk than in his 'senses." Reading this, and remembering the blighted promises of his remaining life and the hopeless mediocrity of his later writings,—we might almost have envied for him the fate of "the marvellous boy" Chatterton. As it is, few literary achievements, save that of Chatterton, can be compared with the production, in the course of a few months, of these manuscripts, including a play of over 2800 lines, by a boy of seventeen. *W. H. Ireland*

The Evening Post.

New York, Tuesday, October 9, 1877.

Ireland's Forgeries.

POSSIBLE PEDIGREE OF THE MSS. IN THE BOSTON LIBRARY.

To the Editors of the Evening Post:

In a late number of your journal you copied from the *Boston Advertiser* an article in relation to the Shakespeare forgeries by Ireland, saying that "a scrap or two of the papers are in the Boston Library." In 1851 James H. Hackett, the actor, presented to me a copy of "An Apology for the Believers of the Shakspeare Papers." It is an octavo volume of 830 pages, printed in 1797. On a flyleaf in the book is the following writing:

"This Book was written by G. Chalmers, Esq., Chief Clerk in the Earl of Liverpool's office. It is generally believed that Mr. Chalmers intended this work to prove the authenticity of the papers laid before the public by Mr Ireland, but on young Ireland's avowing the whole to be a forgery, Mr Chalmers, not willing to lose so much labour and industry, gave it to the world in its present form."

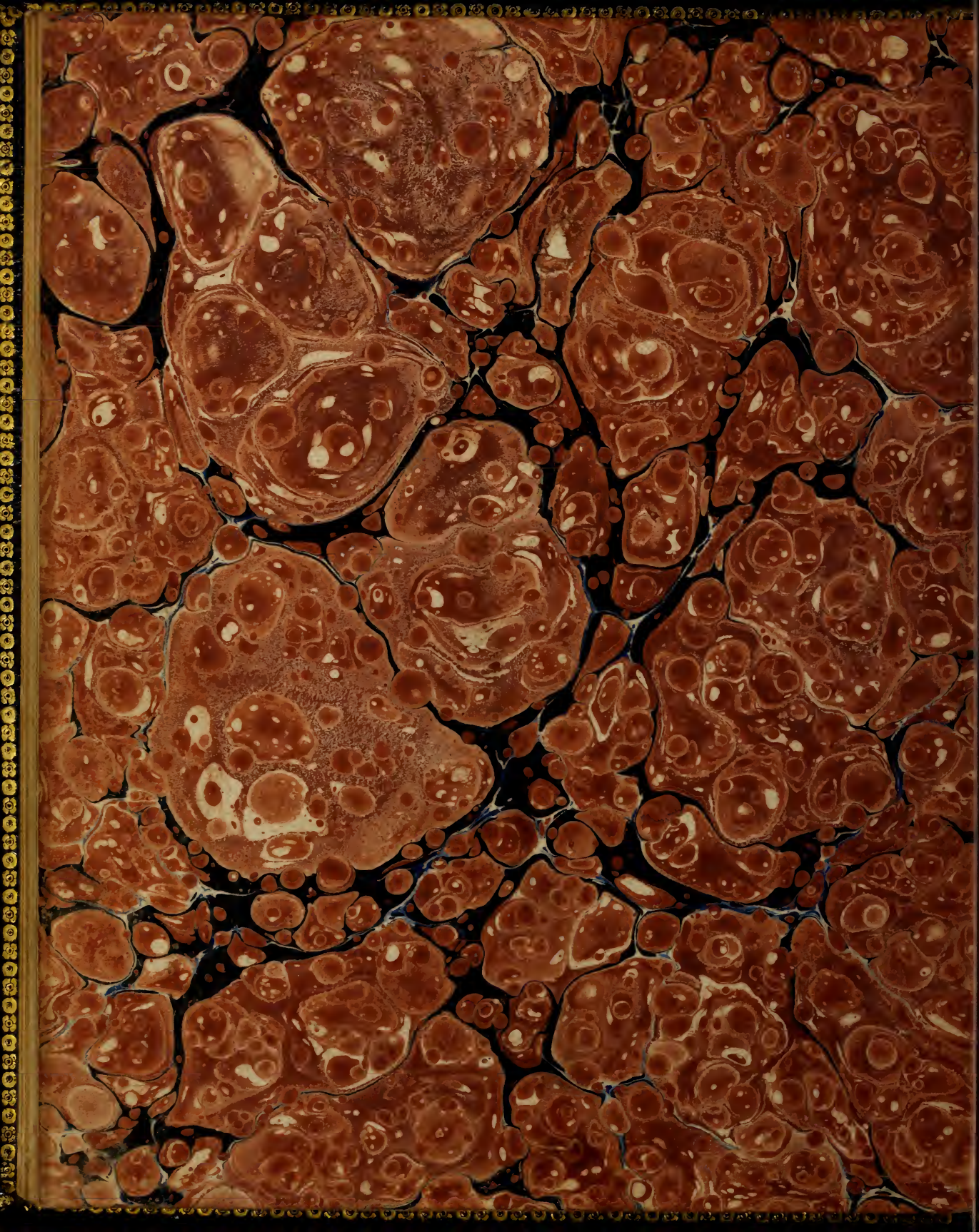
On an adjoining fly-leaf, in the handwriting of Mr. Hackett, is the following:

"These Shakspeare Forgeries, young Ireland's original work, interspersed with his own marginal notes and copious MS. remarks upon incidents connected with their production and first exhibition to the public, as well as the imposition of authority practised upon his credulous father before they were submitted to general inspection, were pledged to the late Charles Mathews, the celebrated mimic, for fifty pounds (£50), by young Ireland, who never was able to redeem them, and eventually sold the work to him. At Mathews's death and sale of his effects they were purchased by John R. Durrant, a wealthy stockbroker of London, who sold them to me. I sold them to Henry Stevens, an American and a collector of literary curiosities in London. JAS. H. HACKETT."

"The scrap or two in the Boston Library" must have been a part of the papers mentioned by Mr. Hackett.

J. J. M.

Fishkill-on-Hudson, October 1, 1877.



Accessions
153,644

Shelf No.
G. 166, 4

Barton Library.



Thomas Pennant Barton.

Boston Public Library.

Received, May, 1873.

Not to be taken from the Library.

